

GRACE C. NICHOLAS

September 28, 1906 – September 5, 2001

Grace Delores Churcher, born in Fresno, California, on September 28, 1906, passed through this world peacefully in her sleep September 5, 2001, in the morning.

Grace grew up in Fresno, went to grammar school, high school (Fresno Tech.), now Fresno High School, and graduated from CSUF (then Fresno State College). She received a degree and teaching credentials from Fresno State in 1928.

While growing up in Fresno, Grace was always active and wanted to do things. She just couldn't just sit still and read like her older sister, Agnes (Agatha). Occasionally, she would climb on the barn roof and look around at the world. One day her baby sister, Bobbie, climbed up with her. Grace was supposed to be watching her, but lo and behold, there was no Bobbie! Where, oh, where was she? Bobbie had walked to the edge and fell off the roof. Luckily, she didn't get hurt, just got the wind knocked out of her. Thereafter, Grace took better care of Bobbie and looked after her with great care. The girls (Agatha, Grace and Bobbie) would have their mother make costumes and they would perform plays in the neighborhood or at school programs. The girls themselves became very good seamstresses and continued making costumes into their later years.

After graduating from college, Grace decided to move to the Bay Area to join her sister Agatha and aunt Ruth Howard. Both moved to San Francisco before Grace. Grace had various jobs to help with finances. At one point during this period, she held a job in a gum factory. She also attended classes at U.C. Berkeley where she made friends readily and belonged to a sorority.

Grace was an adventuresome person. She and a group of her girlfriends went on a "Hobo" trek, dressed like hobos and went camping, etc. Another time she didn't have "wheels" to get to Fresno to visit her mother and family, so she hitchhiked from San Francisco to Fresno and back.

She taught at junior high and senior high levels and decided the kids were too big and unruly so she got out of academic teaching and went in to teaching arts and crafts and folk dancing. She had classes at various schools and recreational centers in and around the Bay Area. Grace was the organizer, instructor, and head of various dance groups, such as Folk Arts, Carrousel, Terpsicorians, etc. These groups did international folk dance exhibitions at various folk dance festivals, at schools, and privately. She taught at folk dance camp at UOP, Stockton, for a number of years. She also went to Jones Gulch annually, teaching and enjoying her friends, as well as meeting new people (hopefully new dancers!)

Grace celebrated life in her dancing. She loved to dance. She enjoyed teaching anyone and everyone who was willing to learn. Grace was very fortunate to meet a man named Nick who liked to dance as well. Together they made a handsome couple on the dance floor and everyone could see how much they enjoyed each other as well as they enjoyed folk dancing.

If Grace were here today, she wouldn't want you to mourn her passing. Rather, she would want you to celebrate life as she did, with music, dancing, and great fellowship with the human race, giving of yourself, giving of your time, and, in general, looking only for the goodness and beauty of this world, at large.

In order to celebrate her life, any remembrances should be sent to UOP, Stockton Scholarship Fund for Folk Dancers, and to the Folk Dance Federation of CA., North, Scholarship Fund. She would enjoy seeing new people in the folk dance arena and enjoy seeing these young people keep the torch burning.

Niece Emilie Keller and Family